

Message Text

PAGE 01 ISLAMA 05401 01 OF 02 051217 Z

46

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 /026 W

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P 051133 Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9902

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 5401

EXDIS

DEPT REPEAT TO OTHER POSTS AS DESIRED

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CENTO, MARR, PK

SUBJ: BHUTTO ON CENTO AND US MILITARY AID

REF: ISLAMABAD 5319

SUMMARY: BHUTTO BELIEVES RESTORATION OF US MILITARY AID TO PAKISTAN WOULD BE IN OUR COMMON INTEREST. HE MAKES DIRECT CONNECTION BETWEEN US MILITARY AID AND PAKISTAN'S REMAINING IN CENTO, AT LEAST OVER THE LONGER TERM. HE SAYS HE WILL NOT, HOWEVER, DO ANYTHING (WITH PARTICULAR REGARD TO CENTO) THAT COULD IN ANY SLIGHTEST WAY EMBARRASS PRES. NIXON. THIS MATTER WILL COME UP DURING BHUTTO'S FORTHCOMING STATE VISIT. END SUMMARY.

1. PRES BHUTTO BEGAN ONE- HOUR MEETING WITH ME AT PRESIDENCY JULY 5 WITH COMMENT THAT MINSTATE AZIZ AHMED HAD DISCUSSED WITH ME " PREMATURELY" GOP'S POSITION ON CENTO (REFTEL). HE WAS NOT SURE THAT AHMED HAD REFLECTED HIS OWN VIEWS PRECISELY. BHUTTO THEN RECALLED THAT HIS PEOPLE'S PARTY MANIFESTO CALLED FOR PAKISTAN'S WITHDRAWAL FROM SEATO AND CENTO, AND HE HAD CAMPAIGNED UNDER THAT MANIFESTO IN 1970. AFTER HE BECAME PRESIDENT, GOP HAD TAKEN OFFICIAL STEP TO WITHDRAW FROM SEATO. HE HAD EXPLAINED TO HIS PEOPLE THAT SITUATION WITH RESPECT CENTO HAD BEEN ALTERED BY 1971 EVENTS AND HIS GOVERNMENT
SECRET

PAGE 02 ISLAMA 05401 01 OF 02 051217 Z

WAS KEEPING ITS POSITION UNDER REVIEW.

2. I REMARKED AT THAT POINT THAT AZIZ AHMED HAD TOLD ME " ACID TEST" FOR PAKISTAN REGARDING CENTO WAS WHETHER

USG WAS GOING OR NOT GOING TO GIVE PAKISTAN MILITARY AID. BHUTTO QUICKLY INTERJECTED THAT AHMED SOMETIMES DOES NOT PUT INTO PROPER WORDS JUST WHAT PRESIDENT HAS IN MIND. FACT WAS THAT HIS PARTY WILL WISH TO HAVE FULFILLED ITS MANIFESTO AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE BEFORE IT HAS TO ENGAGE IN NEXT ELECTION CAMPAIGN. HE WILL HAVE TO BE ABLE TO SHOW THE PEOPLE THAT REVERSAL OF PARTY'S INITIAL POLICY ON CENTO WAS OF BENEFIT TO PAKISTAN. BUT, HE SAID, HE DID NOT ANTICIPATE THAT HIS PARTY WOULD HAVE TO FACT NEXT GENERAL ELECTIONS UNTIL AFTER END OF CURRENT (AND LAST) TERM OF NIXON ADMINISTRATION. " SO LONG AS NIXON IS PRESIDENT WE WOULD NOT LEAVE CENTO IF THAT MIGHT IN ANY WAY BE OF SLIGHTEST EMBARRASSMENT TO HIM." LOOKING AHEAD, BHUTTO WENT ON, WHO MIGHT SUCCEED THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION IN WASHINGTON? WHAT MIGHT ITS POLICY BE TOWARD PAKISTAN? WHAT MIGHT BE THE FUTURE OF ALLIANCES IN GENERAL? LOOKING TO THESE FUTURE CONTINGENCIES, AFTER THE END OF THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION, HOW COULD HE JUSTIFY HIS CENTO POLICY IF HE COULD NOT SHOW HIS PEOPLE SOMETHING OF VALUE LIKE FULFILLMENT OF OUR BILATERAL AGREEMENT (WHICH HE INTERPRETS AS CALLING FOR US MTO PROVIDE SOPHISTICATED MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO SAUDI ARABIA AND OTHER STATES ON PERSIAN GULF. HE ASKED, " WHY SHOULD WE BE LEFT OUT?" DESPITE EXCELLENT RELATIONS BETWEEN IRAN AND PAKISTAN , AND DESPITE PAKISTAN'S GRATITUDE AND DEBT TO THE SHAH FOR HIS FRIENDLY CONCERN, GOP DID NOT FEEL IT COULD COUNT ON IRAN TO DO ITS FIGHTING IN CASE OF NEED. " IF THE INDIANS GO FOR OUR SKINS, WE' LL HAVE TO RELY ON OURSELVES." (BHUTTO THEN SAID, AS AN ASIDE, THAT HE HAD SENT SHAH A PERSONAL NOTE OF THANKS FOR SHAH'S RECENT STATEMENT TO INDIAN CORRESPONDENT IMPLYING THAT IRAN WOULD GO TO PAKISTAN'S HELP IF LATTER WERE ATTACKED BY INDIA.)

3. I REFERRED TO DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN SECRETARY ROGERS AND MINSTATE AZIZ AHMED DURING RECENT CENTO MINISTERIAL
SECRET

PAGE 03 ISLAMA 05401 01 OF 02 051217 Z

MEETING IN TEHRAN, DURING WHICH SECRETARY HAD SPOKEN OF VALUE OF CENTO AND OF POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF ANY PAK DECISION TO WITHDRAW. BHUTTO SAID HE HAD BEEN INFORMED OF SECRETARY'S REMARK TO AHMED THAT THERE WOULD BE " SCALING DOWN" IN OUR RELATIONS IF PAKISTAN WITHDREW FROM CENTO. HE ASKED HOW THAT WOULD SERVE US INTERESTS. " WE ARE A RELIABLE FRIEND. WE ATTACH GREAT VALUE TO OUR RELATIONS WITH US ASIDE FROM CENTO. WE ATTACH INDEPENDENT IMPORTANCE TO US- PAK RELATIONS."

SECRET

PAGE 01 ISLAMA 05401 02 OF 02 051229 Z

46

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P 051133 Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9903

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 5401

EXDIS

4. BHUTTO THEN REVERTED TO HIS GRATITUDE TO PRES. NIXON, WHO HAD TAKEN NUMBER OF DIFFICULT DECISIONS OF VALUE TO PAKISTAN. HE REITERATED THAT HE WOULD DO NOTHING WHATSOEVER TO EMBARRASS PRES. NIXON BUT, ON THE MERITS, HE DID HOPE USG WOULD OPEN UP IN ITS MILITARY COLLABORATION WITH PAKISTAN. THE GOP WOULD HAVE TO LOOK AHEAD TO AFTER THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION.

5. I SAID I WAS GLAD THAT BHUTTO HAD TAKEN NOTE OF GREAT SYMPATHY WHICH PRESENT ADMINISTRATION IN WASHINGTON HAD SHOWN FOR PAKISTAN AND HIS GOVERNMENT. OF COURSE, I COULD NOT AND WOULD NOT PRESUME IN ANY WAY TO SPEAK FOR PRES. NIXON ON PARTICULAR MATTER WHICH BHUTTO WAS RAISING AND WHICH HE WOULD BE DISCUSSING DIRECTLY WITH PRES. NIXON. I SAID I WANTED, HOWEVER, TO TAKE NOTE OF THE FACT THAT ONE OF " DIFFICULT DECISIONS" TO WHICH BHUTTO HAD REFERRED WAS ANNOUNCEMENT OF CHANGE IN OUR MILITARY SUPPLY POLICY LESS THAN FOUR MONTHS AGO. BHUTTO HIMSELF HAD EXPRESSED APPRECIATION AT THE TIME. I DID NOT KNOW OF ANY IMPORTANT NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN PAST SEVERAL MONTHS WHICH MIGHT NOW CALL FOR REVISION IN OUR POLICY. I THEN SUGGESTED THAT BEST SOLUTION FOR ALL CONCERNED OVER LONGER TERM WAS IN SUCCESS OF PEACEMAKING EFFORT WHICH BHUTTO HIMSELF HAD BEGUN LAST YEAR AT SIMLA. REMOVAL OF TENSIONS, SOLUTION OF DISPUTES AND GENERAL IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND INDIA WOULD SEEM, I SAID, TO OFFER GREATEST SECURITY. BHUTTO SAID HE AGREED AND HE WANTED TO
SECRET

PAGE 02 ISLAMA 05401 02 OF 02 051229 Z

CONTINUE ON SIMLA COURSE. STILL, HE REMARKED, PAKISTAN NEEDED TO STAND ON ITS OWN FEET. HAVING AN ADEQUATELY STRONG DEFENSIVE POSTURE WOULD COMPLEMENT GOP'S PEACEMAKING EFFORT. AS FOR INDIANS, HE WENT ON, THEY WOULD GRIPE FOR SOME TIME IF US RESTORED MILITARY AID TO PAKISTAN, BUT AFTER A WHILE THEY WOULD ACCOMMODATE TO THE FACT. I EXPRESSED UNCERTAINTY AS TO HIS JUDGMENT ON THAT MATTER, NOTING THAT GOI SEEMED TO PLACE MAXIMU

IMPORTANCE ON OUR MILITARY RELATIONSHIP WITH PAKISTAN.
BHUTTO RESPONDED THAT, ALTHOUGH HE HAD NOT THOUGHT MATTER
THROUGH AND DID NOT WISH COMMIT HIMSELF AT THIS
MOMENT, PRESUMED EFFECT ON INDIA OF REINSTITUTION OF US
MILITARY AID TO PAKISTAN MIGHT BE MITIGATED BY HIS
SUGGESTING A KIND OF " NO WAR" PACT.

6. OUR DISCUSSION THIS SUBJECT ENDED WITH MY REMARK
THAT I WOULD REPORT CONVERSATION PROMPTLY, TAKING SPECIAL
NOTE OF CLARIFICATION BHUTTO HAD GIVEN WITH REGARD AZIZ
AHMED' S EARLIER STATEMENTS TO ME.

7. COMMENT: IN REFTEL I HAD SPECULATED (CORRECTLY, AS
IT TURNS OUT) THAT BHUTTO MIGHT TAKE SOMEWHAT SOFTER
LINE THAN AHMED ON DIRECT RELATIONSHIP OF US MILITARY
AID TO PAKISTAN' S REMAINING IN CENTO. DECISIVE FACTOR
IN BHUTTO' S MIND IS HIS APPRECIATION FOR NIXON ADMINISTRATION' S
FRIENDLY POSTURE TOWARDS PAKISTAN AND HIS DESIRE AVOID ANY
ACTION THAT COULD SERIOUSLY JEOPARDIZE HIS GOVERNMENT' S
RELATIONS WITH THAT ADMINISTRATION. BENEATH THIS, THERE
IS APPARENTLY SINCERE FEELING IN BHUTTO' S MIND THAT
ALLIANCE RELATIONSHIP CALLS FOR A MORE OPEN US MILITARY
SUPPLY POLICY TOWARD PAKISTAN , ESPECIALLY WHEN IT SEES
NEARBY COUNTRIES (IN GULF REGION) RECEIVING AMERICAN
EQUIPMENT. BHUTTO CAN BE EXPECTED TO UNDERSTAND USG
INHIBITIONS ON MILITARY SUPPLY STEMMING FROM BROADER
INTERESTS IN SUBCONTINENT; BUT THAT DOES NOT MEAN THAT
HE ACCEPTS THESE INHIBITIONS AS COMPLETELY JUSTIFIABLE.
THE ISSUE WILL COME UP SHORTLY IN WASHINGTON AND WE
SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR FRANK DISCUSSION ON IT.
SOBER

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